

**Question for written answer E-001808/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Discrimination in support fund for the public transport sector

Portugal has set up an extraordinary fund to support the public transport sector. It aims to ease the pressure generated by higher fuel prices throughout the EU and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the fifth time since 2021, the Portuguese Government has allowed heavy passenger vehicles to apply for support (taxis were also eligible in the first four phases), but has excluded companies operating in the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira. Their exclusion only exacerbates the inequality they experience as outermost regions (Article 349 TFEU).

The support in question is granted via the Portuguese Environmental Fund. The fund itself is financed through own resources, EU funding (the recovery and resilience plan) and ETS auctions, to which the two regions' companies also contribute. Businesses operating in the regions are not eligible, however.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation? If so, how does the Commission view the exclusion?
2. Given that the Environmental Fund is allocated EU funding, does the Commission intend to take steps to put an end to this discrimination and ensure that climate and digital goals can be achieved in the two regions?

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